(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the cautionary measures taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in the Ministry of Environment & Forests, has so far approved 20 Bt. Cotton hybrids for commercial release on the basis of data generated from the bio-safety studies, efficacy of the introduced trait and agronomic performance of the hybrid/variety for a particular zone on a case by case basis. A rigorous evaluation process is followed by the GEAC while approving various Bt. Cotton hybrids for release. Therefore, the question of premature release of Bt. Cotton hybrids does not arise.

(b) to (d) The findings of the three year study presented by Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur to the GEAC indicate that there has been no development of resistance of Bt. gene and there are no reports from entomologists on the scourge of the American Bollworm. Farmers have been advised to follow the refugia of non-Bt. Cotton while cultivating the Bt. Cotton hybrids.

Economic conditions of farmers

†2438. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of small farmers in the country is maximum;

(b) whether the economic condition of farmers is deteriorating as the agriculture work does not remain profitable now;

(c) whether Government are further deteriorating their conditions by importing wheat and other agriculture items; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) According to the Agriculture Census of 1995-96, the number of operational holdings operated by various categories of farmers is as under:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

No. of Holdings: 000 number

Category of holdings/farmers	No. of operational holdings
Marginal (less than 1 hectare)	71179
Small (1.0 to 2.0 hectares)	21643
Semi-medium (2.0 to 4.0 hectares)	14261
Medium (4.0 to 10.0 hectares)	7092
Large (10.0 hectares and above)	1404
All holdings	115580

(b) In order to make agricultural a profitable and remunerative profession, the Government is proactively focusing attention on following areas:

- Helping States to promote competitive markets in private and cooperative sectors and encourage direct marketing and contract farming so as to enable the farmers to gain better prices for the produce.
- Providing farming community with facilities for scientific storage to reduce wastage and produce deterioration and with adequate credit so that they are not compelled to sell the produce at prices below their cost of production.
- Supporting the farmers with the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for a number of crops so that they can sell their produce at remunerative prices, whenever market prices fall below the MSP level.
- For certain commercial crops such as apples, potato, arecanut, ginger, garlic, onion, oranges, chillies etc., the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) is also implemented at the request of the concerned State Governments by showing the losses incurred in such purchase operations.
- Permitting futures trading at the commodity exchange to enable farmers to discover prices of traded commodities including wheat well in advance of the crop season to enable them to decide when to sell their produce.

(c) and (d) The country is a net exporter of cereals and the position of imports and exports of cereals during 2003-04 and 2004-05 is given below:

(000 tonnes)

Year	Imports	Exports	Net exports
2003-04	2.53	4021.30	4018.77
2004-05	8.13	7923.30	7915.77

However, in order to make up for the gap in the required domestic availability of wheat, Government has decided to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat to the southern ports through the State Trading Corporation (STC).

Employment opportunities for graduates of NDRI, Karnal

2429. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the annual plan and non-plan expenditure of NDRI, Karnal, Haryana, during the last three years, particularly towards research and development;

(b) the details of the courses offered and the number of students enrolled in the institute and passed out during the last three years, year-wise and discipline-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that the students, including PG and research scholars, particularly 'Dairy Technology' students, from the institute do not find suitable employment in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the measures taken to enhance the employment opportunities for the students of the institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The Annual Plan and Non-Plan expenditure of NDRI, Karnal is as follows:—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Non-Plan	Plan
2000-01	2472.07	592.39
2001-02	2617.65	647.90
2002-03	2544.99	638.96
2003-04	2861.91	712.15
2004-05	3227.04	876.00